

Patti's Marathons

In 1970 I looked at my behind in the mirror and was horrified to see that I looked like my mother. I told my best friend, Mary Jones, now Speight, and she told me that she had started to run and suggested I join her. So, I did.

Now 2 years later I was running in the Dallas White Rock Marathon. I came in first for women. I had been a competitive swimmer when in school and had won many races so I had an athletic background which carried over into running.

I ran for about 30 years and 20 of them competitively. During those years Dick and I would run at least 40 miles a week with long runs on Saturday and Sunday, the latter around White Rock Lake in Dallas. I ran with a group of gals and Dick ran with his male running friends. In training for a marathon we built up to 70 miles-a-week and included both hill and speed work. Three days before the race we would carbo-load.

I ran a total of 11 marathons and many shorter races but I never did win a race again though I did well. I ran Boston in 1975 and came in 19th for women which was pretty good for a big race. What stood out was meeting Eric Segal, of "Love Story" fame. We ran together for a while. Then a friend suggested that I speed up and beat him in which I did. The other memorable event was that the race occurred while I was undergoing a divorce. I didn't have much money so my students had a bake sale to raise money for my expenses which allowed me to go. Also, I was interviewed by a Boston radio station after the race.

I won the Masters in the Galveston marathon and received my largest trophy some 2 ½ feet tall. That's the only trophy I have kept. The others I donated to the Special Olympics. This marathon was memorable for 2 reasons. The race was along the sea wall, 13 miles out and then back. On the return there was a gale wind of 40 mph. It was hard. Dick ran a little way with me and I told him I would quit as soon as someone in my age group passed me. That didn't happen so I won. The other memorable event was at

the post-run dinner. It was my birthday and Mary had baked a cake for me. They turned out the lights and a waiter brought in the cake. Unfortunately, he tripped and fell. The cake went splat. But I had already received my present, the win.

I won my age group in the San Antonio marathon. Now at the age of 81 I no longer run. Ten years ago I had total knee surgery bilaterally and was told I couldn't run any longer as it would damage my surgical implants. Now Dick and I walk 2 miles a day in the foothills of the Sandia Mountains in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Swimming and running were two highlights in my life.